

## **Online media control 'not politically motivated'**

**MalaysiaKini.com**

**June 6, 2013**

**By Aidila Razak**

Communications and Multimedia Minister Ahmad Shabery Cheek said that the government's move to look into regulations for online media is "not politically motivated".

Instead, he added, it is more to ensure responsible use of the Internet medium.

shabery cheek at world development information day 301008 01"When it is linked to the Singapore regulations, people may think it is political...

"I cannot be too sensitive, particularly on political content (on the Internet), as we have to look at the Internet as a whole.

"There are just several things which involve abuse - for example, insults to religion - which I believe is the government's responsibility to regulate and not let fly until it fractures society," Shabery (right) noted.

He said that to avoid it being a political decision, the Malaysian Communications and Multimedia Commission (MCMC) has been tasked with studying the matter.

The MCMC will also look into regulations in Australia and the United Kingdom, although they will not have a deadline for their study.

"We should not rush things," he stressed.

He said that the government is also interested to see the consequences of the new regulations in Singapore, which now requires news portals with more than 50,000 clicks to be licensed.

He also noted that there are prevailing laws which can already be used to ensure responsible reporting by online media and use of the Internet.

"For Malaysiakini, there are already laws, use these laws. It doesn't mean we will just let things spread like that. The same goes for other publications," he said.

'Better if people can self-regulate'

He added that the ideal situation would be for users to self-regulate, as it will save

the authorities the trouble to "find people and catch them".

"For example, if someone says 40,000 Bangladeshis voted in the recent polls, if the rakyat can say that this is a lie, then the issue of control do not arise.

"But not when such things can be used to poison the minds of the masses to act irrationally and disrupt public peace," he stressed.

However, he noted that "the majority" of Malaysians are discerning enough to reject outright lies published on the Internet.

NONE"The majority are wise. It's not like someone can say 40,000 (voted), and they will support (this statement). Or if someone says 'March' and they march," he added.

Elaborating further, MCMC chairperson Mohamed Shahril Mohamed Tarmizi (left) said that the agency will take a "holistic" view when studying the matter.

He noted that they will also be looking into making the Internet safer for younger users, since children as young as seven years old are now using smartphones.

"The view is that if we do not allow children to access adult magazines, then they should not be able to access adult websites," he said.

He also stressed that such regulations also exist in countries which "propagate the freedom of expression" like in Australia and the UK.

Copyright © 1999-2012 Mkini Dotcom Sdn. Bhd  
Source: <http://www.malaysiakini.com/news/232255>